THINKING GEO/GRAPHICALLY: THE INTERDISCIPLINARY SPACE BETWEEN GRAPHIC DESIGN AND CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

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Abstract

In relation to the understanding and representation of everyday life and place, it is clear that many cultural geographers are beginning to explore what one might call "creative" qualitative research methods, the majority of which draw on the discipline of fine art. In particular, the use of film and sound within research is increasing, as are calls for conference submissions and journal articles relating to such work. Such developments within cultural geography mirror those across qualitative research within the broader social science arena, and for geographers the use of this type of media is perhaps a way to contend with the ongoing, relational nature of place and the representational challenge that brings. In contrast, the perception of the traditional medium of print seems to be that it is lacking the fluid nature of film or sound, only capable of generating representations of place that are too "static" or "fixed." However, this paper proposes that interdisciplinary collaboration between cultural geography and graphic design offers much with regard to the development of print-based creative methods for understanding and representing everyday life and place. It suggests that the form of the book offers an opportunity to develop geo/graphic work that engages both form and content in a holistic way, enabling the production of a space of interpretation and multi-sensory exploration for the reader. Such work engages with contemporary debates around representation, and positions the reader's interaction with the book as both cognitively and performatively embodied. For the researcher, the geo/graphic design process also functions as an analytical tool, one that, through the development of the material form of the work, re-situates them in place and enables further reflection and understanding.

Introduction

In recent years the intersection between the visual arts and geography has been explored both in theory and in practice, with geographers interrogating their subject through the analysis of art works and collaboration in the making of them (e.g. Daniels 1992; Crouch & Toogood 1999; Driver et al. 2002; Foster & Lorimer 2007). Many artists have also used what might be termed traditional geographic forms, such as maps, field notes and charts, within their work (e.g. Parker 2001; Langlands & Bell 2002) and draw on spatial thinkers such as Michel de Certeau, Walter Benjamin and Henri Lefebvre (Hawkins 2011: 468). More recently many geographers are beginning to engage with media such as film and sound (e.g. Attoh et al. 2011; Gallagher 2008; Garrett, Rosa & Prior 2010). Such media is seen to offer a fluidity and openness in relation to engaging with contemporary definitions of place, and aspects of everyday life that can be described as "more than representational" (Lorimer 2005). Indeed, Pile (2002, 204) suggests that film is the best media for capturing the multiple experiences and "flow of life in the city" as it is able to cut between places, move through time in a non-linear fashion and pan out or zoom in. However, this paper argues that such opportunities are also available within the form of the book. Drawing together theories and practices from both cultural geography and graphic design, it proposes the notion of a geo/graphic design process as a further creative method with which to understand and represent everyday life and place.

The first sections of the paper set out the interdisciplinary territory for the development of the geo/graphic design process, drawing on both theoretical concepts and methods from cultural geography, graphic design and the wider social sciences. An initial, contemporary definition of place is offered as the starting point with which to engage with the ideas that frame the process. In the final section of the paper,

the method is articulated and illustrated using a reflective case study of *A Haptic Journey*, an experimental book[1] created during the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded *Experimenting with Geography: See, Hear, Make, Do* (*EWG*) workshop, organised by Dr Michael Gallagher and held at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Firstly, however, it is necessary to clarify the context in which the term "geo/graphic" has been coined and is used within such an interdisciplinary endeavour.

Defining the Term "Geo/graphic"

The term "geo/graphic" is not intended as a neologism, for it does not offer a new sense of an existing word. A literal translation of the word geography is "earth writings" coming from the Latin roots of "geo"—earth, and "graphy"—writing. Inserting a forward slash between the two elements of the word geographic re-emphasises its constituent parts—geo and graphic. However, used in the context of this paper, "graphic" relates to a wider "visual language," that within the discipline of graphic design is articulated through the creative utilisation of image and/or text within a particular format. Such a shift in meaning enables the productive utilisation of graphic design thinking and practice within the process, and points towards its interdisciplinary nature. The use of a forward slash as opposed to a hyphen was a particular choice. It has been described as a character that can perform a simultaneous "division and doubling," and hint at "meaning that is not quite there yet" (Springgay, Irwin & Wilson Kind 2005, 904). However, the slash doesn't allow limitless interpretations in relation to these new meanings.

> It is the tension provoked by this doubling; between limit/less that maintains meaning's possibility… The slash suggests movements or shifts between the terms… The slash makes the terms active, relational, as they reverberate with, in and through each other (Springgay, Irwin & Wilson Kind 2005, 904).

The angle of the forward slash perhaps allows for this movement, as each word seems to move both towards and away from the other, creating an interactive coupling with the slash acting as a fulcrum or pivot.

In a similar way, undertaking work of an interdisciplinary nature can be framed as being in a position of "inbetweenness… of maybe playing the game but with different rules" (Cocker 2008: 1). This position often offers one a wider choice of methods and here a useful approach is that of the "bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 4), the researcher who uses a set of practices "tailored to the individual project" (Gray & Malins 2004, 72). The specific research methods are not chosen haphazardly, but are taken from interlinked and related approaches in order to form a "developmental set, which is coherent" (Gray & Malins 2004, 72–4). This approach facilitates the construction of a bricolage: "a complex… reflexive collage or montage—a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 6).

For an interdisciplinary study bricolage is appropriate as it "recognises the dialectical nature" of such an undertaking, and "promotes a synergistic interaction" (Kincheloe 2001, 679), enabling one to develop a "new methodological synthesis" (Kincheloe 2001, 685). It is in such "liminal zones where disciplines collide" that new knowledge approaches, like geo/graphical thinking, are likely to be found (Kincheloe 2001, 689; see also Rendell 2006, 11).

To think and work geo/graphically is not to search for and represent some kind of "truth" that can be discovered beneath the "surface" of place, for place itself is a complex proposition that inevitably resists such attempts. Rather, it is a way of engaging with, understanding and representing everyday life and

[1] A *livre d'avant garde*—an avant garde or experimental book is distinct from a *livre de peintre*, the painter's or artist's book. Defined in the late nineteenth century, the artist's book distinguished books that were illustrated by artists rather than those by commercial illustrators. Produced in limited editions, hand signed and numbered; they were in effect *objets d'art*. The *livre d'avant garde* is a less well-known term these days, but identified a book that was more radical and ambitious than the *livre de peintre*, one that challenged the conventions of the book in order to challenge both art and life (Arnar, 2011: 2)

place in all its complexity and polyvocality. The following sections highlight key issues that begin to clarify the parameters and aims of geo/graphic thinking, starting with a definition of place.

Defining Place

The understanding and representation of everyday life and place is a central issue within cultural geography, with place itself a complex notion defined in contemporary geographic terms as ongoing and relational. Such contemporary definitions of place connect the local and the global, offering a "global sense of the local" (Massey 1994, 51) that allows us to see places as both interconnected and unique. The world can be thought of in terms of networks and flows that link "any one local place to a host of other places the world over" (Crang 1999, 31). It is the particular way that these local and global networks and flows interact and intersect in a particular place that gives its uniqueness. Doreen Massey has described place as "process," as something that is open, not static. For Massey, place is…

> the sphere of a dynamic simultaneity, constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined (and therefore always undetermined) by the construction of new relations. It is always being made and always therefore, in a sense, unfinished (Massey 2005, 107).

Defining place in this way brings its own representational challenges; however, this is not the sole issue geographers need to contend with in regard to the understanding and representation of everyday life and place.

Visual Representation and Reality

The representation of everyday life and place is seen as problematic within contemporary cultural geography, not only because of the ongoing nature of place and the subjective nature of the researcher's experience, but also because of the theory that much of one's experience of place resists capture—it is "more than representational" (Lorimer 2005). Thrift's (1996, 2000a and 2000b) non-representational theory suggests that representations, especially those that are text based, are incapable of communicating the multi-sensory experiences of everyday life, and privilege the text rather than the experience (Del Casino & Hanna 2006, Nash 2000). Yet the turn from visual and literary texts to a focus on expressive, body practices simply creates a new version of an old divide—theory and practice (Nash 2000, 657). For print based geo/graphic work, the challenge is perhaps to create "open" (Eco 1989) work that enables a new performance with each reading, rather than attempting to contain place within a "fixed," mimetic representation. Some would say this were an impossible task, with text based representations inevitably losing immediacy and words never able to catch up with the event (Dirksmeier & Helbrecht 2008). However, to accept that certain things in life are "unsayable or unwrite-able" is to imply that "the work of referring to the world is fruitless" which seems strange, as we spend much of our time attempting to do such things—for example, recounting stories of our day to friends (Laurier & Philo 2006, 354–5). So perhaps persisting with "traditional" print-based forms of representation still offers some possibilities. Indeed, even the most traditional of visual representations of place, the map, can be reframed as capable of offering a new reading each time it is engaged with.

> [M]aps stretch beyond their physical boundaries; they are not limited by the paper on which they are printed or the wall upon which they might be scrawled. Each crease, fold, and tear produces a new rendering, a new possibility, a new (re)presentation, a new moment of production and consumption, authoring and reading, objectification and subjectification, representation and practice (Del Casino & Hanna 2006, 36).

Similarly, Kitchin & Dodge (2007, 331) suggest that "cartography is profitably conceived as processual, rather than representational, science" and that "maps emerge through practices" – their preferred term is mappings. This "processually emergent" understanding (Gerlach 2008, Latham & McCormack 2004) questions the taken for granted ontological position of cartography as objective and truthful, and positions

maps as "ontogenic in nature… always remade every time they are engaged with" (Kitchin & Dodge 2007, 335). Without these practices, a map is simply a collection of lines, points and ink-shaded areas the map-reader has to bring to life. This perspective offers a "conceptual shift" (2007, 335) in thinking about maps that could be applied to other representational artefacts.

There is clearly resonance here with Barthes' (1977) notion of the "death of the author," with the map being produced and reproduced by the reader. Del Casino & Hanna's (2006, 37) move is towards "map spaces" that are simultaneously both representations and practices. This way of thinking inextricably links the map with space and the experience of that space and enables the possibility of grounding a representation in print without "fixing" the meaning. In a similar vein, Crouch (2010) discusses the performative nature of two-dimensional artworks, not just in their material production, but also through the viewer's engagement.

> The performative 'life' or vitality of the artwork – even two dimensional work – is performed too by the individual in his and her encounter with it. Two dimensional pictures may not be experienced only through the gaze, but with diverse dispositions of the body, memory, recall, intersubjectivity, emotion, fear and anxiety…(Crouch 2010, 8).

Many geographers have moved from a theoretical engagement with art to a practical one, and are exploring the potential of collaboration with artists and drawing on artistic methods and practices in their own work.

Artistic Collaborations and Methodological Developments

De Silvey & Yusoff (2006, 573) state that "art and geography share a common route in the search for knowledge through the medium of vision" and that "art plays an important role in questioning geography's visual methods" (2006, 574). Ryan (2003) suggests collaboration and dialogue with visual artists as a route to new ideas, and creative research projects between geographers and artists have enabled a proactive sharing of ideas and the development of new visual methodologies (e.g. Driver et al. 2002; Foster & Lorimer 2007). Partly through such collaborations with artists, but also through debates around issues such as non-representational theory, performativity and phenomenology (Davies & Dwyer 2007, 257), contemporary cultural geographers are engaging with research methods and "interpretive strategies" that "enable them to capture the ephemeral, the fleeting, [and] the immanence of place" (Davies & Dwyer 2007, 261). Such approaches are also due to postmodern shifts within qualitative social science research methods in general (e.g. O'Neill 2008; O'Neill & Hubbard 2010; Roberts 2008), which rather than attempting to reveal certainty or truth, adopt an open and reflective stance in relation to interpreting the complexity of the world.

In much of this work, geographers have sought to engage with everyday life and place in a more experiential way, and walking "has become increasingly central as a means of both creating new and embodied ways of knowing and producing scholarly narrative" (Pink et al. 2010, 1). There is a rich history of walking within the study of everyday life and place, with writers and practitioners such as de Certeau, Walter Benjamin, Henri Lefebvre, the Surrealists and the Situationist International underpinning such a practice. Walking offers an embodied engagement with the environment, and rather than emphasise the researcher's position of being an outsider entering *into* the field, it positions them as "walking *with*—where 'with' implies not a face to face confrontation, but heading in the same way, sharing the same vistas…" (Lee & Ingold 2006, 67). The pace of walking also offers the opportunity and time for reflection (Edensor 2010, 72), with its rhythm generating a "rhythm of thinking" (Solnit 2001: 5). Walking is described as

> …the intentional act closest to the unwilled rhythms of the body, to breathing and the beating of the heart. It strikes a delicate balance between working and idling, being and doing. It is a bodily labour that produces nothing but thoughts, experiences, arrivals (Solnit 2001, 5).

Walking also engages one beyond the cerebral, offers a multi-sensory experience of place, and the development of a "sensory ethnography" takes this "multisensoriality of experience perception, knowing and practice" as its starting point (Pink 2009, 1).

In tandem with these experiential, embodied methods, many geographers are also engaging with film and sound as ways of exploring and recording everyday life and place. This is evident in the workshops, conference calls and special interest groups that are emerging (see for example Experimenting with Geography at http://www.michaelgallagher.co.uk/experimenting-with-geography and the Experimental Research list at https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=EXPERIMENTALRESEARCH). Cultural geography can obviously be richer for these developments but many of these technologies seem to be chosen (perhaps partly due to discussions around the non-representational) via a conscious rejection of the old; that there is a sense that print equates to the immovable, to the tired, dusty pages of academic journals that refuse to "move with the times."

Some geographers are concerned with the potential offered by printed text, and Brace & Johns-Putra (2010) in their study of creative writing suggest that the practice of crafting a text is also performative and by taking this position address the divide between thought and practice referred to by Nash (2000). They glimpse

> …a fusion of thought, action, body and text in ways that undermine the epistemological separation of representation and non-representation and thereby avoid the critique of representation that emphasises its static fixity and evacuation of process (Brace & Johns-Putra 2010, 403).

Brace & Johns-Putra's (2010) work focuses on creative writing and the potential of a poetic engagement with place. However, every printed text has a visual and physical form and choices are made in relation to elements such as stock and typeface. These choices contribute to the reception of a text, yet such issues seem rarely discussed within cultural geography.

Graphic Design: Communicating with Form and Content

The function of graphic design in basic terms is to communicate by giving visual form to content. In doing so, the designer uses elements such as typography, colour, image and format, and essentially attempts to engage the reader as a "dynamic participant," persuading through rhetoric and argument rather than statement (Tyler 1992, 22). Frascara (2006, xiv) states that the designer should create a "space" where people engage with a message and develop interpretations. This acknowledges that there is a possibility of multiple meanings being developed by a variety of readers and the idea of a "space of interpretation" provides an interesting model to pursue with regard to the representation of everyday life and place. Such an idea places the reader at the heart of the process and, much like the previous discussion in relation to the reframing of the notion of the map, aligns well with Barthes' (1977) *Death of the Author*: "The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (1977, 148).

This paper focuses on print based graphic design, and in particular the form of the book, and Birdsall (2004, vii–viii) suggests that "a rigorous study of content" is crucial to producing a well designed book, but states that although this seems like common sense, it is "surprisingly uncommon in book design." This is perhaps partly due to the fact that graphic design is often accused of perpetuating a repetitive "life cycle of style" rather than pursuing any real critical exploration (Fitzgerald 2003, 16). In order to move beyond what he criticises as the "retinal" state of graphic design, Mermoz seeks to go beyond "surface pattern and complacent self-expression" (Mermoz 1998, 41). He sees the role of the designer and typographer as making "explicit the strategy of the text, and letting 'meanings proliferate' and suggests that by doing this, the work of the designer "converges and coincides with Barthes' definition of reading" (Mermoz 2002, 5). Here Mermoz is perhaps referencing Barthes' (1990, 4) notion of the writerly text, the goal of which is to position "the reader no longer as a consumer, but as a producer of the text," with the writerly text plural in its meanings and interpretations. In a sense, Mermoz is suggesting that through

graphic design and typography, it is possible to view the book or the page as a liminal space, as a threshold between the reader and their engagement and understanding. Neither the book nor the page is, in a traditional sense, a physical place, but both can act as a gateway to place in the mind, and it is the possibilities offered by an holistic approach to form and content that can open up such a space. If the design creates a "space of interpretation" then the page can become a place of exploration, with the reader able to "travel through it like an expedition" (Goebbels 1997, 63).

Canadian designer Bruce Mau attempts to develop an extended "experience" in much of his book design. Mau suggests that the book unfolds in a "temporal dimension" (Mau & Mermoz 2004, 33), which is a similar proposition to Carrion (2001, n.p.) who sees the book thus:

> A book is a sequence of spaces. Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment—a book is also a sequence of moments… Written language is a sequence of signs expanding within the space: the reading of which occurs in time. A book is a space-time sequence.

Indeed, the job of a book designer could, in its widest sense, be described as "a space-time problem" (Hochuli 1996, 35). This would suggest that a book could offer the fluidity and structural opportunities that Pile (2002, 204) finds within film. Such a view on books is not a new standpoint; as early as the late 1800s, the poet, writer and designer Stephane Mallarmé proposed that the book could redefine reading through the exploitation of its "textual, visual and temporal elements" (Arnar 2011, 2). In Mallarmé's eyes, the reader should become an active participant in a reading process that is creative, indeed Barthes "essentially credits Mallarmé with having given birth to the reader" (Arnar 2011, 287). Interestingly, Mallarmé was developing this kind of approach at a time when the publishing industry was suffering a financial crash, with competing newer forms of media such as photography and the newspaper said to have impacted on the book's popularity (Arnar 2011, 47). There are perhaps parallels here with this paper and the observation that there is an increase in experimentation within geographic research with newer technologies in the form of film and sound. Indeed, within graphic design, the future of the book has also been cast into doubt and much has been made of "the end of print." However, Mallarmé used such a challenge to re-evaluate the book, understanding that new media could engender a productive transformation or evolution of the book, rather than its extinction (Arnar 2011, 291), and it is such an approach that this paper wishes to espouse.

In contemporary graphic design terms, books by designers such as Bruce Mau are developed using the "design process" – a flexible, iterative, recursive and progressive process that could be likened to a process of analysis. Because of this similarity, the designer's decisions can be clearly articulated, and in a sense "validated," therefore the process offers a useful transparency. It also offers transferability, as the process of graphic design cannot be undertaken until one has content, and that content can be anything at all because the design process is generic in nature and is, therefore, inherently adaptable. The transparency and transferability of the design process and its similarity to the process of analysis that drives research generally, highlights a creative process that cultural geographers, and other scholars, could use productively within work that seeks to communicate the ongoing production of everyday life and place. However, this paper seeks not only to address representation for representation's sake, but also understanding that, much like writing (Richardson 2000, 923), design can be used as a "method of inquiry" itself, not just a "mode of telling." Through design, and in particular prototyping, one engages in a symbiotic and productive exploration of both form and content. In terms of its analytical benefits, prototyping—the process of realising and developing initial design ideas through practice—could be likened to writing, which "deepens our analytical endeavour" (Coffey & Atkinson 1996: 109), or walking. For example, Tilley (2004: 223–4) describes walking as forcing one to "…perceive actively, to make connections, to articulate thoughts and feelings which would otherwise remain at a pre-reflective… level of consciousness." So, prototyping can be seen as "an activity to concretise thoughts and make them visible" (Mattelmäki & Matthews 2009, 6) and in the context of the geo/graphic design process, the material form of the work, in a sense, re-situates one in place and allows further reflection on one's experience of place.

The geo/graphic design process needs to bring to life the inhabited, open ended nature of place and to that end, the design interventions need to engage with the narratives of place and offer the reader some kind of interaction and experience that will "transport" them to the place in question. The experience needs to "be" that of place, rather than be "about" place. Thus the work needs to create primary experiences, but how can one draw together these seemingly diverse theories and practices and create this geo/graphic space of interpretation?

Geo/graphic Practice: Seeing, Hearing, Making and Doing

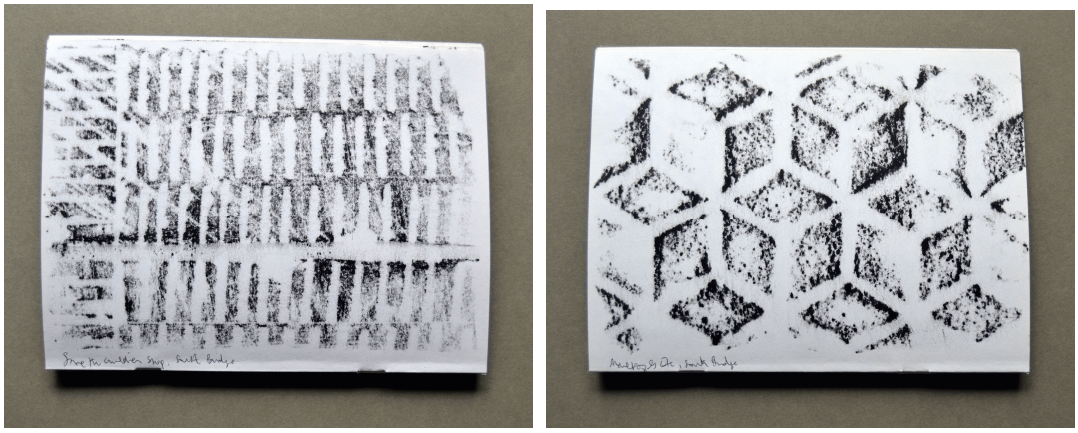
This section of the paper now turns to a reflective discussion of *A Haptic Journey*, an experimental book developed during the ESRC funded *EWG* workshop, held in May 2010 at Edinburgh University. Organized by Michael Gallagher, a social and cultural geographer now based at The University of Glasgow, the workshop was developed in order to explore his theory that social research could benefit from the adoption of some of the techniques used within different types of creative practice. The workshop brought together a range of early career researchers and doctoral students, from the social sciences, and art and design. The majority of the participants were engaged in sound and video work, and much of the focus of the week was on those areas, however, there was an experiential immediacy to many of the approaches and workshops, with an emphasis on engaging with everyday life and place in an embodied, experiential way.

The workshop revealed the potential residing in this more "immediate" experience of place. During the workshop sound, video and performance artists were running drumsticks along railings just to see what it sounded like, jumping onto a bike to film themselves cycling to a derelict Wild West town south of the city, and recording howling dogs to create a canine reworking of Ennio Morricone's spaghetti Western soundtrack. Being literally out of one's usual place, and surrounded by people working in a different way enables one to shift one's thinking and approach. My approach to experiencing place, primarily through walking, was not as extreme as those listed above, but it became both more hands on and, paradoxically, a way of letting go more. This is not to suggest that it was somehow sitting on the fence, neither adopting a hands-on nor a hands-off approach, rather, it was a realization that one could complement what might be considered normative graphic design research strategies with more immediate, experiential understandings of place.

Only in Edinburgh for a week I had both a limited time to research the city and to develop ideas that could be explored geo/graphically. It was a place I had visited once before, but not for many years, so I was coming to it with few preconceptions. From the moment I arrived at Waverley Station I was struck by the solidity of the city. It seemed to be literally hewn from the rock. From the imposing figure of the castle, to the refined Georgian terraces of New Town, the stone facades face the elements, silently seeing out season after season, year after year. I found myself running my hands across the stone as I walked, feeling textures made by nature and by stone carvers. The city seemed to heighten my haptic perception. I began to think about how I could record these experiences, and initially began to photograph the stone textures (Figures 1–2).

Figures 1–2 Stone textures in Edinburgh, Scotland

However, this seemed to negate something of the multi-sensory experience of place, losing the connection between the stone, the place and my body, so I began to take simple rubbings of surfaces as I explored the city on foot. This process seemed to retain a sense of connection between hand, paper and stone and therefore recorded the experience of touching in a more immediate way. The more I walked, the more I saw, the more I touched, and the more I rubbed. After completing each rubbing, I recorded the building's name and address. I carried out this process for a couple of hours each day, over the course of four days, sometimes undertaking it whilst walking with the sole purpose of discovering potential rubbings, at other times whilst walking to and from the workshop venue. This produced pages of what, in traditional terms, one might call "data," but in graphic design terms is perhaps more often called content. Whichever term one uses, for it to contribute to the understanding and representation of everyday life and place, it needs to be analyzed. Upon engaging with the material I found that there were huge differences in the type of rubbings I had taken. Some were clearly old, some were much newer; some had been created by the craftsperson's hand, some by machine; some were geometric in nature, others more arbitrary in their patterning; and, some contained text, others simply texture. I noticed I had also begun to move beyond stone as a material, engaging with concrete and iron for example, but all images were part of the visible fabric of Edinburgh (Figures 3–4).



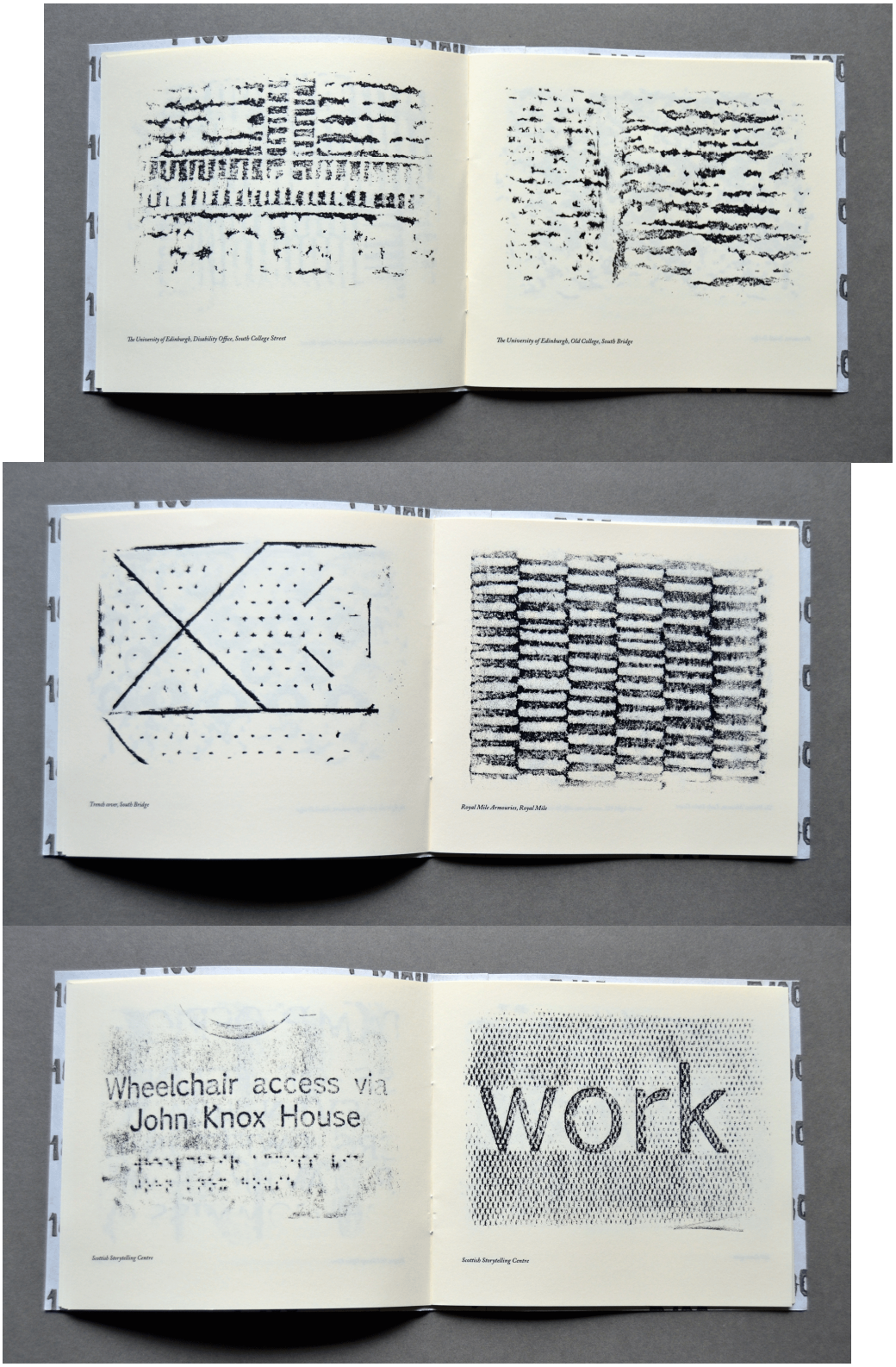
Figures 3–4 Examples of rubbings taken from textures within Edinburgh

These images may seem inconsequential at first, but they provoked diverse thoughts in relation to a range of issues, for example, the traditional skills of stone masonry and the fact that this is perhaps a dying art due to the mechanization of processes and changing use of architectural materials. The realization that textures under foot not only play a part in our physical sense of the city but also our experience of the sound of it; and, how such materials and textures can be used to define areas or mediate our behavior in some way. Analyzing the rubbings essentially re-situated me within the city, enabling me, in effect, to retrace my steps and to further reflect on my experience of place. So my challenge was perhaps how best to offer a similarly situated experience to the reader.

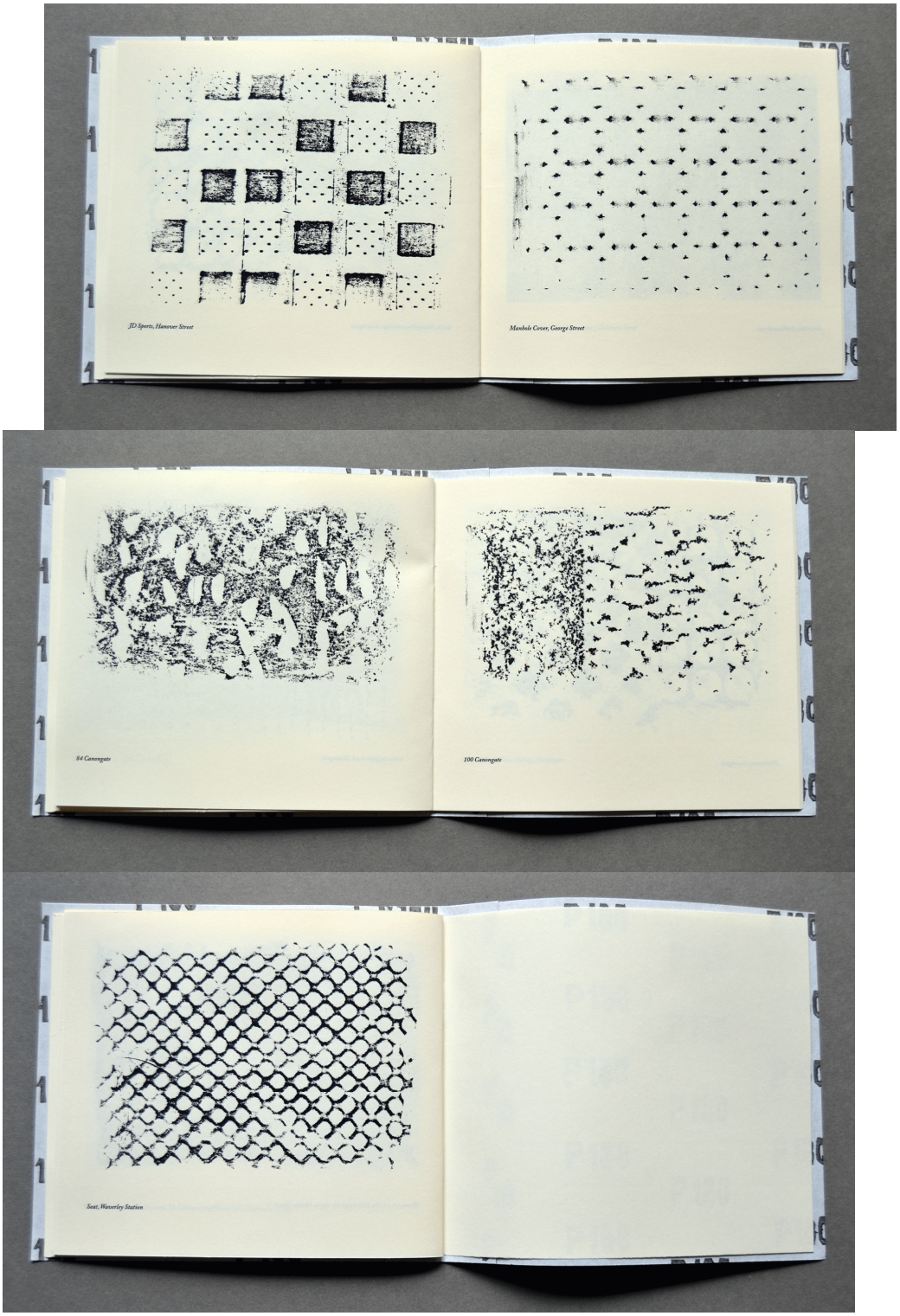
At this point form and content need to be approached in a holistic way, with the two combining to offer an overall experience for the reader. Edinburgh is a large city, yet as I explored it, I undertook my own particular journey through walking and engaging with the city in an embodied way, seeing the micro within the macro. To that end, I began to develop a small book (148 mm x 125 mm), enabling the reader to hold it easily within the palm of their hands (Figures 5–6).

Figures 5–6 Title page and introduction to A *Haptic Journey*

Rather than lay the book on a table and view it from above, like one does with a map, the reader can bring the book to meet their eyes. As they turn the pages, they engage with the space of the book physically, and could be said to be "walking *with*" me and "sharing the same vistas" (Lee & Ingold 2006, 67). I chose to show the journey almost as I had undertaken it, in temporal terms, with the last image being the seat I sat on as I waited for the train that would return me to London (Figures 7–12).



Figures 7–9 Sample pages from *A Haptic Journey*



Figures 10–12 Sample pages from *A Haptic Journey*

Below each rubbing the name and/or address of the building was included. The only editing undertaken was to exclude those rubbings that had not been successful in terms of recording a clear image. In this way, the journey does not offer up an immediately obvious narrative to the reader as the

images may seem almost arbitrary in their order and, much like film, cut, pan and zoom from location to location. Unlike watching a film at the cinema, the reader can control this process, so they can double back, slow down, skip pages, or even take the journey in reverse. In this respect, the reader can then begin to piece together their own narrative and, as I did, reflect on the myriad of connecting issues about everyday life and place that images of the rubbings generate.

The material aspects of any piece of graphic design offer much in relation to the communication and engagement with the reader. In the same way that place is not experienced through sight alone, design, and particularly books, have the potential to engage the reader through a range of senses. The reader interacts with a book in both a visual and a physical way and one can therefore engage with a range of interventions that trigger the reader's imagination and enable them to bring their own understanding of these experiences to bear on their reading of the book and, therefore, their understanding of place. Much of Edinburgh's traditional old buildings are built with sandstone, and although many are covered in grime from years of exhaust fumes and pollution, there is still a predominance of a warm, cream coloured hue to many of them. The stock used within the pages of the book reflects this colour and tone, therefore capturing the visual experience of walking within the city. The rubbings are printed in black and therefore echo the build up of grime over the stone, and the imposition of the print on the paper perhaps references the process of creating a more textural "imposition" within the fabric of place. Whilst these design interventions engage the visual, they don't go as far as engaging the reader with my experience of running my hands along the sandstone which was the trigger for the original idea. I needed a material that could evoke that physical experience—it was to be found in my local hardware store, not the stationers, with the cover made from P180 grade sandpaper, which emulates the roughness of the stone when it is handled (fig. 13). The material aspect of printed matter engages the reader through touch and this is something that eludes digital media.

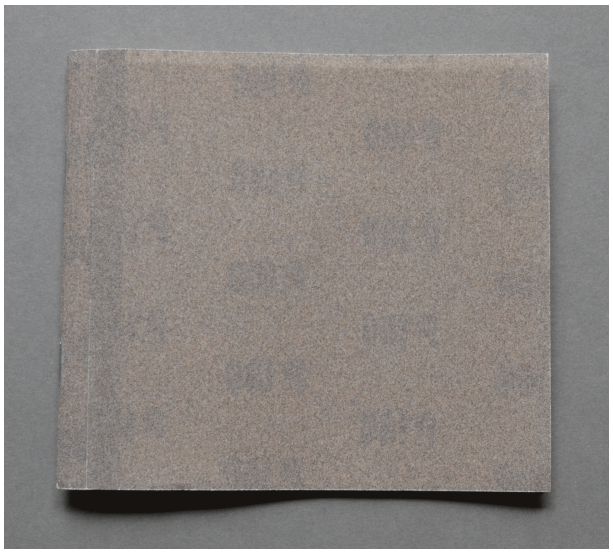


Figure 13 Cover of *A Haptic Journey* using sandpaper

This low-tech method is an accessible way of approaching the geo/graphic design process—one that is inclusive to both disciplines, rather than just graphic designers who may have access to specialist printing facilities. For example, the 80gsm colored paper was purchased from a large stationary chain and is printed using an ordinary black and white laser printer. The original rubbings were done onto the ordinary paper of cheap sketchbooks with a wax crayon; there is nothing here that is prohibitively expensive or difficult to get hold of. Perhaps the perception of an "experimental book" conjures up the kind of limited editions that cost thousands of British pounds and are held in the special collections of national galleries. However, this idea of a limited edition—one that is constructed using limited resources—can be used in a positive way. Equipment such as photocopiers, scanners, A4 paper and

printers, found in most academic departments regardless of discipline, can be used to generate work that goes beyond the traditional use of such tools. *A Haptic Journey* reflects Calvino's (1997, 10–11) description of a city:

> The city… does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

The geo/graphic design interventions, and the productive relationship developed between form and content, enable the reader to take their own journey within the city of Edinburgh, allowing them to make their own connections and develop their own understandings of everyday life and place.

Conclusion

A geographer's central aim is not just to represent place, but to explore, understand, and make sense of the ongoing, complex and relational production of place. The representational problem is therefore how to convey this, rather than representation being the sole aim itself. In grappling with this issue, geographers have turned to more experiential and embodied ways of researching place, and in tandem, have begun to favor media such as film or sound that are perceived as more capable of engaging with the complexities of place and the "more than representational" (Lorimer 2005). In proposing the notion of a geo/graphic design process, this paper asserts that it is possible to engage in such embodied methods whilst using print—and more specifically the book—as a vehicle for conveying this experience. It suggests that representations that adequately reflect place need to some extent remain "open" and engage the reader in the reconstruction and interpretation of place.

The geo/graphic design process also functions as an analytical tool for exploring the making of place through the making of the book, with the processes of analysis and prototyping re-situating the researcher within place. In terms of communication, for both the reader and the researcher, the relationship between form and content is key. This may be a very different way of approaching the printed page for many in academia and for those with little design experience, the accessibility of such geo/graphic ideas is important. Researchers could benefit from likening "design moves," that explore the place of the page and book, to similar bodily moves they might make when traditionally exploring place; for example, turning corners, looking beneath or behind things, changing positions to get a different view or recording and collecting elements that offer insights into everyday life in a place. The interventions made within *A Haptic Journey* do not rely on a high level of graphic design expertise; rather they draw on communicative ideas in relation to form and content, developed during the process of analysis.

Thinking and working geo/graphically offers potential for engaging with print based representations of everyday life and place that can complement recent methodological developments in cultural geography. The paper positions the geo/graphic design process as offering the opportunity to reframe the act of engaging with the book as both cognitively and performatively embodied, in a similar way to both Brace & Johns Putra's (2010) thoughts on creative writing. In adopting a similar stance to that of Mallarmé, this paper seeks to offer geographers, disillusioned with a traditional medium, an opportunity to re-evaluate its potential.

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